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news Briefs



SPUD GROWING IN LEAF PILES GOES GLOBAL

The Potato Leaf Project, a clever way to use waste leaves and grow food at the same time, is an example of a home-grown idea gone viral. The idea, which was first featured in a story in *EW* (12/30/10), is now making its way around the world.

The Potato Leaf Project came about by a group of participants in one of the "Sustainable Eugene" meetings held at the University Longhouse in November 2010. The idea was initially suggested by David Hazen, creator of The City of Peace, as a way to help those in need of jobs, income and food.

The initial goals of the project were to:

- Keep the leaves in neighborhoods by finding a place to use them in a planting project.
- Bring individuals in communities together in a food sharing mode, similar to the Neighborhood Gardens which are developing around town (Common Ground Garden and the Edgewood Garden).
- Use potatoes because they are so easy to grow.
- Encourage the potential for business possibilities for the low-income and jobless. For example: starting a Mission Garden where homeless community members could tend to the growing.

Additionally, the potatoes could be sold to local stores or simply prepared in storable food products and then sold. They could also be donated to FOOD for Lane County.

In November, leaves were ordered from the city of Eugene's Leaf Collection Program. When they were delivered, they were piled up in a neighborhood easement, which is the back alley of a street owned by the neighbors. The leaves were laid in a 100-foot row about 2 feet high to begin decomposition. In the spring, they were planted with seed potatoes (using many varieties for testing). As the spuds grew out of the

pile, they were covered with more leaves to form mounds, which covered the new green growth under the leaves to promote more tuber growth. In August or September, the neighbors will harvest potatoes.

As of today, the testing goes on around the world. People in Guam, France, Spain, Texas, Arizona and around Lane County have been inspired by this process and are building their own potato patches. It is an ongoing event, and any other suggestions and participation are welcomed. — *Ginny Ducale, ginny@efn.org*

A version of this story first appeared at www.transitioneugene.org

WAR DEAD

In Afghanistan

- **1,647 U.S. troops killed*** (1,638)
- **12,450 U.S. troops wounded in action** (12,306)
- **887 U.S. contractors killed** (763)
- **\$432.6 billion cost of war** (\$429.3 billion)
- **\$123 million cost to Eugene taxpayers** (\$122.1 million)

In Iraq

- **4,421 U.S. troops killed** (4,421)
- **31,922 U.S. troops wounded in action** (31,922)
- **185 U.S. military suicides** (updates NA)
- **1,542 U.S. contractors killed** (1,537)
- **111,215 to 1.2 million civilians killed*** (110,949)
- **\$786.7 billion cost of war** (\$785.5 billion)
- **\$223.7 million cost to Eugene taxpayers** (\$223.4 million)

Through July 11, 2011; sources: icasualties.org; defense.gov, U.S. Dept. of Labor

* highest estimate; source: iraqbodycount.org; based on confirmed media reports; other groups calculate Iraqi civilian deaths as high as 655,000 (Lancet survey, 2006) to 1.2 million (Opinion Research Business survey, 2008)